

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who is the narrator of this novel? What do you know about her? Talk about her relationship with Zora. Why do you think the authors wanted to tell the story from her point of view?
2. Think about the first time we see Zora as a storyteller. What is so special about the way that she tells the story of Mr. Pendir transformed into a half gator (page 8)? Explain what the narrator means when she says that Zora turns the story of Sonny's death "into a storied pearl" (page 5).
3. The narrator talks about the difference between a true story and a made-up one. She says, "Just because something's good listening doesn't necessarily make it true" (page 12). Think about your own experience. Have you ever been in a situation where a story was stretched to make it more interesting? Tell your story to a partner and discuss which parts are true and which are exaggerated.
4. In chapter five, the narrator says, "That's how Zora saw things. Everything in the world had a soul" (page 26). What does having a soul mean to Zora? Think about something you see every day. Describe the soul or essence of that thing.
5. Who is Ivory? What is special about the children's encounter with him?
6. How does Joe Clarke respond when Zora tells him about Mr. Pendir? What insight does this give the reader about Mr. Pendir's character?
7. Joe Clarke is very upset when he hears about Ivory. What do we learn later about his relationship with Ivory?
8. What is a *pall*? What does it mean that a pall had "fallen on the whole town" (page 63)?
9. In chapter ten, Mr. Hurston is preparing to go to Orlando to preach for a week. During the family dinner the night before his trip, he promises each one of his children a gift. What does Zora say when it is her turn to tell her father what she wants? Describe Mr. Hurston's response to Zora. How does Zora react when Mr. Hurston asks her if she thinks she is white? What does being white mean to Mr. Hurston?
10. What is the difference between a daddy's girl and a mama's girl according to Carrie? What do you think Zora expects of herself?
11. In chapter thirteen, Zora and Carrie meet Gold. How do they describe her? What is their reaction to her? Who is the man with Gold? Mrs. Hurston says about Gold, "She best be careful about being too friendly with people she gave up her place with" (page 85). What does this mean to you?
12. Who is Snidlets? Describe the relationship between Mr. Ambrose and Zora. Why would this be considered an uncommon relationship in Eatonville during the early 1900s? Discuss Mr. Ambrose's use of the word *niggers* (page 97). Do you think Mr. Ambrose is a racist? Why or why not?
13. The narrator says, "Zora's story about Mr. Pendir wasn't a lie. It was her way of making things make sense" (page 99). How does Zora defend her story during recess? How do Stella and Hennie respond?



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